

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS: NO MORE DROPOUTS

**P-16 Council
Agenda Item F-1
September 21, 2001**

Discussion

Kentucky needs to increase its undergraduate enrollments by 80,000 by 2020. Current dropout levels in high school and college may keep us from reaching that goal. The current annual dropout rate from high school is 5.02 percent, which translates to 9,354 young people who leave our elementary and secondary system each year without a high school diploma. These dropouts may eventually re-enter the system of education through an adult learning center to obtain a General Educational Development diploma (GED), or they may return to an alternative education program, or they may never return to school. Those with low levels of education are more likely than the general population to find themselves in poor health, in a low-paying job, or in jail.

The staffs of the Kentucky Department of Education, the Council on Postsecondary Education, the Workforce Development Cabinet, and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System met jointly to ask:

- How can we provide students whatever learning opportunities they need—whether offered in the schools, on college campuses, through the Kentucky Virtual High School, or by adult education providers so they will be successful and receive the "High School +2" education they will need to be economically self-sufficient?
- How can each educational provider be held accountable for results and still work smoothly with other providers to the benefit of students?

The agencies are identifying programs that work to keep students in the education system, such as dual enrollment and dual credit programs between high schools and postsecondary institutions, and effective use of Individual Graduation Plans for middle and high school students. They also are identifying perceived and real barriers preventing students from preparing for life and work. These include funding issues, such as the average daily attendance (ADA) funding for public schools, and regulations preventing high school dropouts from quickly obtaining a GED and at-risk students from using adult education resources.

The goal of this collaboration is to prevent any student from dropping out of school before obtaining the education he or she needs to be economically self-sufficient and productive. The staffs of the collaborating agencies and institutions are beginning this discussion and seek advice and direction from the P-16 Council. They plan to come back in December with a concept paper.